



# Department of Justice

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## **FIVE ADDITIONAL DEFENDANTS CHARGED IN CRACKDOWN AGAINST WORLDWIDE INTERNET PIRACY GROUPS**

### ***Second Set of Indictments Arising From Charlotte FBI Undercover Investigation for Operations FastLink and Site Down***

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Five individuals were charged with criminal copyright infringement in Charlotte, North Carolina, as part of an ongoing federal crackdown against international online piracy groups responsible for most of the illegal distribution of copyrighted movies, software, games and music on the Internet, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Gretchen C. F. Shappert of the Western District of North Carolina, and FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Kevin B. Hendrick of the Charlotte Division announced today.

Kevin Fuchs, 25, of West Amherst, New York; and Cuong Quoc Trang, 35, of Parker, Colorado, were charged by indictment with conspiracy to commit criminal copyright infringement, violating the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, and copyright infringement. A criminal information charged Matthew Alderman, 24, of Ashland, Oregon, with criminal copyright infringement, and David Morvant, 35, of Thibodaux, Louisiana, and Michael Hays, 51, of Delafield, Wisconsin, with conspiracy to commit criminal copyright infringement.

Operations FastLink and Site Down—the two largest and most aggressive international enforcement actions against criminal organizations involved in the illegal online distribution of copyrighted material—resulted in a total of more than 200 search warrants executed in 16 countries; the confiscation of hundreds of computers and illegal online distribution hubs; and the removal of more than 100 million dollars worth of illegally-copied copyrighted software, games, movies, and music from illicit distribution channels. Countries participating in these U.S.-led operations included: France, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Hungary, Israel, Spain, Australia, Singapore, Brazil, Belgium, and Germany.

“Large-scale operations like FastLink and SiteDown strike at the core of online piracy,” said Assistant Attorney General Fisher. “Losses to industry and individuals from online piracy are enormous, and law enforcement will continue to do everything it can to protect valuable copyrighted products and shut down these illegal distribution networks.”

Both Operations FastLink and Site Down were the culmination of multiple FBI undercover investigations, but only one of those investigations participated in both operations: the Charlotte undercover investigation responsible for today's charges. These charges are the latest in a series of actions taken by the Department of Justice to crack down on illegal online piracy. Operation FastLink has yielded 28 felony convictions to date; while, in Operation Site Down, 53 individuals have been charged and 23 individuals convicted of felony offenses.

"Intellectual property theft is a growing crime with serious economic consequences," said U.S. Attorney Shappert. "Operations FastLink and SiteDown combine the resources of the Justice Department, 42 separate U.S. Attorney Offices, and FBI agents from 30 separate field offices, in a concerted effort to attack organizations dedicated to the piracy of intellectual property."

The five defendants charged today are alleged to have been leading members in the illegal software, game, movie, and music trade online, commonly referred to as the "warez scene." They are charged with playing key roles in these organized warez groups that act as "first-providers" of copyrighted works to the Internet—the so-called "release" groups that are the original sources for a majority of the pirated works distributed and downloaded via the Internet. Once a warez release group prepares a stolen work for distribution, the material is distributed in minutes to secure, top-level warez servers throughout the world. From there, within a matter of hours, the pirated works are distributed globally, filtering down to peer-to-peer and other public file sharing networks accessible to anyone with Internet access. These warez groups supply the for-profit criminal distribution networks that cost the copyright industry billions of dollars each year.

"Theft of intellectual property strikes at the very heart of this country's economic vitality," said FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Kendrick. "Crimes of this type are a priority within our Cyber Crimes Program and the public can be rest assured that we will continue to aggressively investigate those individuals and organizations involved in activity such as this in an effort to bring them to justice."

These cases are being prosecuted by Senior Litigation Counsel Eric Klumb, Senior Counsel Corbin Weiss of the Department's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Corey Ellis of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of North Carolina.

The charges contained in the indictments and informations are allegations only and the defendants are presumed innocent until convicted at trial.

More information on Operation Site Down may be found at:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/OperationSiteDown.htm>

<http://www.cybercrime.gov/OpCopyCat4Indict.htm>

<http://www.cybercrime.gov/OperationSiteDown.htm>

More information on Operation FastLink may be found at:

<http://www.cybercrime.gov/desirPlea.htm>

<http://www.cybercrime.gov/fastlink.htm>

More information on Operations FastLink and Site Down may be found at:

<http://www.cybercrime.gov/OpSiteDown8Charge.htm>

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